

Wereld

[Alle onderwerpen](#)[In het Nederlands](#)

Mijn wereld

[Aanmelden](#) om mijn berichten te zien.

Zoek in discussie

Groep: [75 Books Challenge for 2009](#) ✕**Onderwerp:** [The Chronicles of Wunderkind, Episode II: Attack of the Tomes](#) **0 / 48 gelezen****Bericht 1:** [wunderkind](#) dec 24, 2008, 1:57am ([naar boven](#))

Ha, a Star Wars pun. I make myself laugh sometimes. But not this time.

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 4, 2009, 2:31pm.[markeer misbruik](#)**Bericht 2:** [flissp](#) dec 24, 2008, 6:19am ([naar boven](#))

...made me giggle...

[markeer misbruik](#)**Bericht 3:** [digifish_books](#) dec 24, 2008, 6:23am ([naar boven](#))

Great title! :D

[markeer misbruik](#)**Bericht 4:** [lenereadsnok](#) dec 24, 2008, 11:24am ([naar boven](#))Very clever. Made **me** laugh!*Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, dec 24, 2008, 11:28am.*[markeer misbruik](#)**Bericht 5:** [cal8769](#) dec 24, 2008, 11:45am ([naar boven](#))

Nice!

[markeer misbruik](#)**Bericht 6:** [FlossieT](#) dec 27, 2008, 5:43pm ([naar boven](#))

Love it :-)

[markeer misbruik](#)

Touchstone works

[The Master and Margarita](#) door Mikhail Bulgakov[Aubrey's Brief Lives](#) door John Aubrey[The Worst Journey in the World](#) door Apsley Cherry-Garrard[The Brothers Karamazov](#) door Fyodor Dostoevsky[Flowers for Algernon](#) door Daniel Keyes[Frankenstein](#) door Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley[Heart of a Dog](#) door Mikhail Bulgakov[The Magic Christian](#) door Terry Southern[The Harold Nicolson Diaries 1907-1963](#) door Nigel Nicolson[God Is Dead](#) door Ron, Jr. Currie[The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas](#) door Machado de Assis[Catch-22](#) door Joseph Heller[The Guns of August](#) door Barbara W. Tuchman[A Prayer for Owen Meany](#) door John Irving

Toetssteen auteurs

[John Aubrey](#)[Mikhail Bulgakov](#)[Apsley Cherry-Garrard](#)[Ron, Jr. Currie](#)[Fyodor Dostoevsky](#)[Joseph Heller](#)[John Irving](#)[Daniel Keyes](#)[Machado de Assis](#)[Nigel Nicolson](#)[Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley](#)[Terry Southern](#)[Barbara W. Tuchman](#)

Bericht 7: dec 28, 2008, 12:34am ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

Aw shucks, thanks everybody...

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 8: jan 4, 2009, 2:25pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

1) The Heart of a Dog by Mikhail Bulgakov--I read [The Master and Margarita](#) last year and liked it a lot, so I thought I'd try this earlier novel by Bulgakov. It's not as good, but it also features anthropomorphic animals and a dubious professor, and it also satirizes the Russian Revolution and communism, although that's not something I care much about. The plot is sort of [Frankenstein](#) crossed with [Flowers for Algernon](#) with an injection of Bulgakov's own brand of bizarreness, wherein a scientist replaces a dog's pituitary gland with a human's and discovers that the pituitary is the source of the hormones that dictate appearance, or something. The biology is ridiculous, but I guess that's not the point. There's a character named Poligraph Poligraphovich, and I think that sums things up nicely.

"You belong to the lowest possible stage of development," Philip Philipovich shouted him down. "You are still in the formative stage. You are intellectually weak, all your actions are purely bestial. Yet you allow yourself in the presence of two university-educated men to offer advice, with quite intolerable familiarity, on a cosmic scale and of quite cosmic stupidity, on the redistribution of wealth...and at the same time you eat toothpaste..."

Currently reading: [The Brothers Karamazov](#), [The Worst Journey in the World](#), and [Aubrey's Brief Lives](#)

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 4, 2009, 2:47pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 9: jan 4, 2009, 5:57pm ([naar boven](#))
[deebie1](#)

interesting book to start the year! i, too enjoyed The M&M, so perhaps i'll try [The Heart of a Dog](#). i see you're reading Cherry-Garrard -- i love that book, definitely one of my best reads of all time. hope you're enjoying it.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 10: jan 4, 2009, 6:12pm ([naar boven](#))
[Kidzdoc](#)

I've added [The Heart of a Dog](#) and [The Master and Margarita](#) to my Amazon wish list; thanks!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 11: [alcottacre](#) jan 5, 2009, 12:39am ([naar boven](#))

. . . And I am putting them both on Continent TBR!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 12: [Whisper1](#) jan 5, 2009, 9:21pm ([naar boven](#))

Wunderkind...Two good reads to start 2009! It looks like the force is with you.....

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 13: [wunderkind](#) jan 5, 2009, 11:21pm ([naar boven](#))

Yes, the force is strong with me.

I realize now that I have set myself up with a Star Wars theme despite the fact that I haven't watched the original trilogy since I was 12. I'm going to have to rewatch them so I can sprinkle in appropriate quotations.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 14: [wunderkind](#) jan 7, 2009, 1:51am ([naar boven](#))

2) The Magic Christian by Terry Southern--Soooo bad. I happened to buy a copy of this at a used book sale only because I like Penguin paperbacks from the 50s, and later read a review on LT that implied that it would be funny, or at least absurdist. Instead, it's a dated, unfunny, sometimes offensive story of a ridiculously rich guy named Guy who plays a series of practical jokes on the public (e.g., dumping hundred dollar bills into a giant vat of excrement to see how far people will go for money, deliberately running businesses into the ground, staging a cruise ship hijacking), culminating in what I assume was a parody of Senator McCarthy. The whole book was mean-spirited and unpleasant, but apparently it was one of Peter Sellers' favorite books (or maybe that makes sense). Interestingly, it was written a few years before Southern wrote the screenplay for "Dr. Strangelove", which has the same type of humor and unpleasantness. I never really liked that movie much either.

Currently Reading: [The Brothers Karamazov](#), [The Worst Journey in the World](#), and [Aubrey's Brief Lives](#)

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 7, 2009, 1:53am.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 15: [alcottacre](#) jan 7, 2009, 2:00am ([naar boven](#))

Sounds like one I definitely do not need to add to Continent TBR. Thank you for suffering through it so that I do not have to!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 16: [wunderkind](#) jan 7, 2009, 2:01am ([naar boven](#))

No problem, it was pretty short.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 17: [mattplozza](#) jan 7, 2009, 3:16am ([naar boven](#))

That actually sounds a little intriguing. I probably wouldn't like it but after your mini-review I'm interested enough to want to read it myself....

Oh and nice thread title.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 18: [wunderkind](#) jan 7, 2009, 8:39pm ([naar boven](#))

>Mattplozza: The idea was good, but the execution was bad (in my opinion). Still, it's pretty short, so it wouldn't be a colossal waste of time to read it.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 19: [wunderkind](#) jan 14, 2009, 1:52am ([naar boven](#))

3) **The Harold Nicolson Diaries** by Harold

Nicolson--I've got a lot to say about this book, but the short version is that I really enjoyed it. Nicolson (more well-known to some as the husband of Vita Sackville-West, writer and friend of the Bloomsbury Group) was a Foreign Service officer, then a journalist, then a Member of Parliament during WWII, and knew all the politicians and writers and royals of the day, so he was able to comment on just about everything important about British politics and history of the period (1907-1963). To that end, it's really fascinating to hear what he has to say about the famous personalities and events.

But, as with any volume of personal writing, the author's character is hugely important. For the first half of the book, I really liked Nicolson--he was a very nice and intelligent man with a good sense of humor, was unfailingly decent and almost always able to see the best in people and sympathize with those he didn't like when they inevitably received their comeuppance. However, after a while I became increasingly annoyed by his faults, which were relatively minor and mostly a product of his times and upbringing (e.g. snobbishness, racism, a bit of sexism); I never really disliked him, but it did bother me when he would say something that was nearly offensive (only once was he definitely offensive), and I think I was bothered mostly because I had already grown to like him so much. However, I didn't get to that point until I was about 300 pages into it, and after another 100 pages I had come round

to accepting his faults and being quite fond of him, which is probably impossible to avoid. He really does seem like a very nice person.

Here are some of his impressions:

on James Joyce: *"I suppose he is a real person somewhere, but I feel that I have never spent half-an-hour with anyone and been left with an impression of such brittle and vulnerable strangeness."*

on Einstein: *"He looks like a child who for fun has put on a mask painted like Einstein. He is a darling."*

on the royal children: *"The children then come in and are very well-behaved and natural. Prince Charles (aged six) crams his mouth with coffee sugar; Princess Anne (aged four) picks at it delicately."*

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 14, 2009, 1:58am.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 20: jan 14, 2009, 12:39pm ([naar boven](#))
[suslyn](#)

who can pass up a thread with a title like that?

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 21: jan 15, 2009, 9:49pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

4) Drawers and Booths by Ara 13--After the staid dignity of the Nicolson diaries, I had an urge to read a book by someone young and contemporary, which isn't an urge I get very often. I ordered Drawers & Booths (touchstone not working, I guess) based on the one review it has here on LT, got it today, and started it twenty minutes later when I should have been paying attention to a lecture on cellular neurobiology (oh well, that's what textbooks are for...).

This book definitely falls into the "metafiction" category, for what it's worth, and I don't know how to describe it without giving away things that should be left for the reader to discover. Let's just say that the story starts at an army MASH unit in a politically unstable country, is hijacked by a character from a different story who's hunting down the ultimate criminal, and culminates in the most important trial in the history of mankind (or does it?!?!? dun dun dunnnn). It's crazy and funny and thought-provoking and I loved it.

Excerpt!!!

"I suppose others thought I was trying to make a hodgepodge of things so the book would never see light of publication."

Marcus continued the reasoning. "The less sense the story made, the less likely an agent or publisher would find it credible?"

"That's the logic."

"In fact, you renamed the book from Displaced People

to Drawers & Booths, a nonsense title, merely because the author has trouble pronouncing those words, making it even harder for him to promote."
"I like the new title. It's catchy."

PS--My used copy is signed by the author "Ara XIII, To McBrazil Nut, Thank You!"

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 15, 2009, 9:53pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 22: jan 15, 2009, 10:00pm ([naar boven](#))
[billiejean](#)

Hi, wunderkind!
What exactly is metafiction?
--BJ

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 23: jan 15, 2009, 10:12pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

Hi billiejean!
I only understand metafiction as a vague concept, so I went to Wikipedia for an actual definition: "Metafiction is a type of fiction that self-consciously addresses the devices of fiction." So there's a lot of breaking of fourth walls, authors stepping into the story, that sort of thing. For instance, in the middle of "Drawers & Booths" the first-person narrator excuses himself to take a cell phone call, at which point there are two completely blank pages before the call ends and the narrator comes back. There's another blank page later after an incidental character, under instructions from the author, invites the reader to jot down any profound thoughts or impressions, with the understanding that anything written on the page will be the copyrighted property of the author, since it's his book.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 24: jan 15, 2009, 11:55pm ([naar boven](#))
[suslyn](#)

lol

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 25: jan 16, 2009, 5:08am ([naar boven](#))
[flissp](#)

sounds great - that's going to the top of my wishlist!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 26: jan 16, 2009, 7:17am ([naar boven](#))
[FlossieT](#)

wunderkind, that sounds like great fun - will look out for it.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 27: jan 17, 2009, 8:43pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

5) God is Dead by Ron Currie, Jr.--An odd little novel, which I suppose could be described as post-apocalyptic. The story begins with the guilt-ridden God wandering through war-torn Sudan in the guise of a young African woman, before being killed by the Janjaweed. When word gets around that God really is dead, all hell breaks loose, with the formerly ultra-conservative Christians in America turning to worship of their own children, mass suicide of nuns and priests, and, once society gets back on its feet, a war between Evolutionary Psychologists and Post-Modern Anthropologists. And Colin Powell makes an appearance at the beginning in what was apparently a misguided attempt by the (white) author to tap into the guilt felt by assimilationist African-Americans, or something. I'm not sure what that had to do with the rest of the book, but whatever.

Anyway, if all of that sounds interesting and potentially amusing (which is what I thought), I hate to say that something goes moderately wrong in the execution. It's not terrible, but it just doesn't really make sense-- I don't mean the part where God dies, but everything that follows. I mean, it's amusing to think of the followers of deterministic Evolutionary Psychology warring with the supposedly liberally open-minded PoMo Anthropologists, but there's very little humor that I could detect in the writing to suggest that it wasn't meant to be taken at least somewhat seriously and I just couldn't suspend my disbelief enough. I also thought it was a shortcoming of the book that it only looked at the aftermath as it occurred in parts of Africa and particularly the United States. What about the rest of the world? And why did God put himself into such a life-threatening situation anyway? Overall, I would say that [God is Dead](#) isn't bad, but it is quite unsatisfying in its treatment of a really interesting idea and probably would have benefited from some humor.

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 17, 2009, 9:17pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 28: jan 18, 2009, 1:45am ([naar boven](#))
[alcottacre](#)

#27: I think I will pass on that one, Erin. I hate it when the author comes up with a sound premise and then fails to deliver!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 29: jan 18, 2009, 2:09am ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

Apparently it was the author's first published novel, so maybe next time he'll have the writing chops to match his creativity--I'm definitely willing to give him another chance, if the publishers are.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 30: jan 19, 2009, 10:38pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

6) Epitaph of a Small Winner, aka The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis--Together, the variously translated titles of this 19th century Brazilian novel pretty much do the summarizing for me: the (fictional) memoirs of a man who decides to write his life story after he's dead, even though nothing much really happened to him. Bras Cubas is the scion of a wealthy family, so you've got the prodigal youth, the love affairs, the ambition hobbled by laziness, etc. The narrator's voice is entertaining, and even though he's a self-centered, egotistical, irresponsible scoundrel you still kind of root for him, but ultimately I'm just not sure what the point of the novel was. Still, it was enjoyable and the very short chapters kept the story moving. Machado de Assis (or should I say Bras Cubas?) plays around with novelistic conventions too, with titles like "The Defect of This Book", "Not Profound", and "Unnecessary". For example, here is Chapter 55, "The Venerable Dialogue of Adam and Eve", in its entirety:

Braz Cubas: . . . ?
Virgilia:
Braz Cubas:
Virgilia: !
Braz Cubas:
Virgilia:
.
Braz Cubas:
Virgilia:
Braz Cubas:
. . . . ! !
!
Virgilia: ?
Braz Cubas: !
Virgilia: !

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 19, 2009, 10:50pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 31: jan 20, 2009, 12:10am ([naar boven](#))
[suslyn](#)

lol! thx for sharing :)

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 32: jan 20, 2009, 12:51am ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

You're welcome. :) Don't worry though, I didn't actually count out the exact number of dots to use--the above is an approximation.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 33: jan 20, 2009, 12:54am ([naar boven](#))
[alcottacre](#)

#30: All I have to say is, that if all the chapters I like that, it makes for a very quick read!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 34: jan 20, 2009, 9:50am ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

The chapter "How I Did Not Become a Minister of State" was even shorter: just a block of evenly spaced periods.

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, jan 20, 2009, 9:50am.

[markeer misbruik](#)

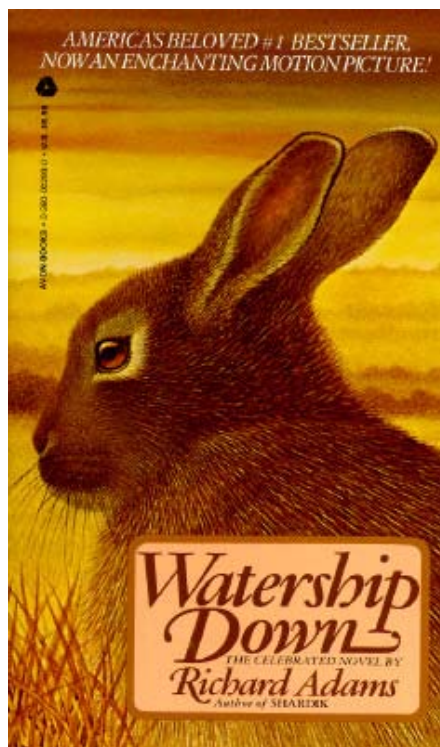
Bericht 35: jan 20, 2009, 2:02pm ([naar boven](#))
[alcottacre](#)

Reminds me of one Catey has home from the library right now - Chapter 1 is nothing but 2 pages of the letter x!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 36: jan 20, 2009, 9:14pm ([naar boven](#))
[wunderkind](#)

Took a quiz to find out which book I am and am pretty pleased with the results...



You're *Watership Down*!

by Richard Adams

Though many think of you as a bit young, even childish, you're

actually incredibly deep and complex. You show people the need to rethink their assumptions, and confront them on everything from how they think to where they build their houses. You might be one of the greatest people of all time. You'd be recognized as such if you weren't always talking about talking rabbits.

Take the [Book Quiz](#) at the [Blue Pyramid](#).

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 37: [alcottacre](#) jan 21, 2009, 12:30am ([naar boven](#))

Thanks for the info about the quiz! It was fun to do - I am [Catch-22](#).

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 38: [suslyn](#) gisteren, 4:15am ([naar boven](#))

LOL They say I'm a book I've never heard of, and I can't agree with their take on 'me', but: [The Guns of August](#) by Barbara Tuchman. Though you're interested in war, what you really want to know is what causes war. You're out to expose imperialism, militarism, and nationalism for what they really are. Nevertheless, you're always living in the past and have a hard time dealing with what's going on today. You're also far more focused on Europe than anywhere else in the world. A fitting motto for you might be "Guns do kill, but so can diplomats."

Hmmm if I feel young instead of old (the answer changes with the day), I'm: [A Prayer for Owen Meany](#) by John Irving. Despite humble and perhaps literally small beginnings, you inspire faith in almost everyone you know. You are an agent of higher powers, and you manifest this fact in mysterious and loud ways. A sense of destiny pervades your every waking moment, and you prepare with great detail for destiny fulfilled. When you speak, IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS!

Edited to try again for those touchstones...

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, gisteren, 4:17am.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 39: [ronincats](#) gisteren, 12:40pm ([naar boven](#))

Susan, you prefer armadillos to rabbits????

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 40: [wunderkind](#) gisteren, 1:36pm ([naar boven](#))

Isn't the armadillo in [A Prayer for Owen Meany](#) stuffed?

I wonder what that means...

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 41: [flissp](#) gisteren, 1:41pm ([naar boven](#))

#38 suslyn, turns out I'm [A Prayer for Owen Meany](#) too...

#39 ronincats, rabbits are eveal ;)

#40 wunderkind, clearly, I'm actually going to have to read [A Prayer for Owen Meany](#) this year - everything is pointing me at it - there was even an adaptation playing on the radio when I picked my car up from it's MOT today!

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 42: [suslyn](#) gisteren, 1:58pm ([naar boven](#))

>39 Well I grew up in Tx... I'd have to say my preference depends on the moment... just like whether or not I feel old...

ETA for a meal, I vote rabbit every time :)

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, gisteren, 1:58pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 43: [flissp](#) gisteren, 2:01pm ([naar boven](#))

hmmm... i wonder what armadillo tastes like?

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 44: [ronincats](#) gisteren, 2:22pm ([naar boven](#))

Well, a rabbit would have gotten you to Watership Down, so you probably ended up in the right place.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 45: [wunderkind](#) gisteren, 7:07pm ([naar boven](#))

flissp: *hmmm... i wonder what armadillo tastes like?*

Like chicken?

Bericht bewerkt door schrijver, gisteren, 7:07pm.

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 46: [alcottacre](#) gisteren, 12:21am ([naar boven](#))

#43 flissp: Should I run one over and ship it to you so you can report back? Not hard to find them here in Texas . . .

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 47: [flissp](#) vandaag, 6:51am ([naar boven](#))

#45 wunderkind - yes probably!

#46 alcottacre - i'm tempted to say yes please ;)

[markeer misbruik](#)

Bericht 48: [suslyn](#) vandaag, 7:23am ([naar boven](#))

Okay, you asked for it.

How many Aggies does it take to eat an armadillo?

(Aggies, in this question, refer to folks associated with Texas A&M University.)

[markeer misbruik](#)

([terug naar boven](#))

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